

social service organizations to help tell their stories in meaningful ways. The performances resulting from these partnerships are often the only arts experience a group may have.

Founding Co-Artistic Directors Jane Jones and Myra Platt were named among seven Unsung Heroes and Uncommon Genius by The Seattle Times for their contribution to life in Seattle; The Paul G. Allen Family Foundation awarded them a 20th Anniversary Founder's Grant; in 2010, Book-It was given a Mayor's Arts Award; and in 2012, the Governor's Arts Award.

As we celebrate the Silver Jubilee of Book-It Repertory Theatre, I would like to convey my congratulations to Book-It on its steadfast commitment to delivering broad, high-quality live theatre experiences to its constituents in Seattle and throughout all of Washington.

THE SHAME OF IRANIAN HUMAN RIGHTS

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 27, 2015

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, at a time when the administration seems keen to reach a nuclear accord that relies on trust in the Iranian regime and perhaps even a de facto collaboration in the fight against ISIS, it is wise to consider and scrutinize the dismal human rights record of this country with which we are currently conducting negotiations based on good faith. How they treat their own people is illustrative of how they see and will treat outsiders. A hearing I convened yesterday provided a critical examination of human rights in Iran—which is important and necessary in its own right—and also placed it in the context of the administration's efforts to partner with this regime on critical issues.

According to a report by the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in Iran, between July 2013 and June 2014, at least 852 people were executed in Iran. Shockingly, some of those executed were children under the age of 18. Iranian human rights activists place the number of people executed by the Iranian regime at 1,181.

The current Department of State human rights report states that Iranian human rights violations include disappearances; cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment, including judicially sanctioned amputation and flogging; rape, politically motivated violence and repression, harsh and life-threatening conditions in detention and prison facilities, with instances of deaths in custody; arbitrary arrest and lengthy pretrial detention, sometimes incommunicado.

While the Iranian constitution grants equal rights to all ethnic minorities and allows for minority languages to be used in the media and in schools, minorities do not enjoy equal rights, and the regime consistently denies their right to use their languages in school. In addition, a 1985 law, the Gozinesh (selection) law, prohibits non-Shia ethnic minorities from fully participating in civic life. That law and its associated provisions make full access to employment, education, and other areas conditional on devotion to the Islamic Republic and the tenets of Shia Islam.

The regime disproportionately targets minority groups, including Kurds, Arabs, Azeris, and

Baluchis for arbitrary arrest, prolonged detention, and physical abuse. These groups report political and socioeconomic discrimination, particularly in their access to economic aid, business licenses, university admissions, permission to publish books, and housing and land rights.

Because of severe religious freedom abuses, our Government has designated Iran as a Country of Particular Concern since 1999. The frequent arrest and harassment of members of religious minorities has continued, following a significant increase in 2012. The government severely restricts religious freedom, and there have been reports of imprisonment, harassment, intimidation, and discrimination based on religious beliefs. There have been continued reports of the government charging religious and ethnic minorities with "enmity against God," "anti-Islamic propaganda," or vague national security crimes for their religious activities. Those reportedly arrested on religious grounds faced poor prison conditions and treatment, as with most prisoners of conscience.

One of those imprisoned on religious grounds is Pastor Saeed Abedini, a U.S. citizen and father of two—Rebekkah Grace and Jacob Cyrus—and a Christian imprisoned in Iran because of his faith. Pastor Abedini was imprisoned by the Iranian regime nearly 1,000 days ago, when members of the Revolutionary Guard pulled him off of a bus and placed him under house arrest. He was later taken away—in chains—to Evin Prison, where he has endured periods of solitary confinement, beatings, internal bleeding, death threats, and continued psychological torture, all because he would not deny his Christian faith.

What was Pastor Abedini's crime? According to the court, he was a threat to the security of Iran because of his leadership role in Christian churches in 2000–2005. President Obama promised Pastor Abedini's son Jacob that he would do all he can to gain his father's release by the boy's birthday next month. Earlier this week, Secretary of State John Kerry, in answer to my question on this matter, said the administration was working quietly to gain Pastor Abedini's release as soon as possible. Let's hope.

Meanwhile, Iran is repeatedly cited for virtually unrelenting repression of the Baha'i community, which Iran's Shiite Muslim clergy views as a heretical sect. Baha'i number about 300,000–350,000. At least 30 Baha'is remain imprisoned, and 60 were arrested in 2012. A February 2013 UN report said in that 110 Baha'is were in jail, with 133 more expected to start serving jail time. Since the 1979 Islamic Revolution, the regime has executed more than 200 Baha'is. The regime frequently prevents many Baha'is from leaving the country, harasses and persecutes them, and generally disregards their property rights. Iranian regime officials reportedly offer Baha'is relief from mistreatment in exchange for recanting their religious affiliation.

Iranian courts offer no recourse to the monstrous violation of human rights because without an independent judiciary, Iranians (and foreigners tried in those courts) are routinely denied fair public trials, sometimes resulting in executions without due process. This also results in ineffective implementation of civil judicial procedures and remedies and allows arbitrary interference with privacy, family, home, and correspondence.

This is the regime the administration trusts to make agreements and honor them. I call on the administration to do more than acknowledge these facts—it must take more seriously the blatant disregard of the rights of people and factor this into any interactions we have with this predatory regime. How can we make any binding agreement with such a dishonorable regime? That question remains to be answered.

RECOGNIZING MRS. ANNA BARRY
AS THE 2016 ESCAMBIA COUNTY,
FLORIDA, TEACHER OF THE
YEAR

HON. JEFF MILLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 27, 2015

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mrs. Anna Barry as the 2016 Escambia County Teacher of the Year. Teachers are amongst our Nation's most valuable public servants. They are responsible for mentoring our students and ensuring that our next generation emerges ready to lead our Nation in the future. Mrs. Barry's assiduous work ethic, unbridled enthusiasm, creativity, and commitment to student engagement exemplify the characteristics of an exemplary teacher.

For more than a decade, Mrs. Barry has served the students of Northwest Florida, inspiring them to strive for excellence and empowering all those who pass through her classroom to reach their full potential. Her dedication to her students' success fosters an atmosphere of achievement, and her commitment to a layered curriculum teaching method, where each individual student can take ownership of their education, helps ensure that students remain engaged and conscientious.

Mrs. Barry began her career teaching U.S. History, Science, and Geography at Ernest Ward Middle School. Despite being new to the profession, Mrs. Barry tackled her position head on and immediately began making an impact on her students. She also took on leadership positions at the school and helped to coordinate instruction amongst all grade levels.

Following her successful years at Ernest Ward, Mrs. Barry began teaching at her high school alma mater, Northview High School, where she once again established herself as an exceptional teacher and leader. At Northview, Mrs. Barry has served as a Faculty Leader, History Department Chair, and a member of the Florida Standards Team, which helps ensure that teachers are ready to meet the updated state education standards. While at Northview, she has also taken the lead in several other initiatives, including forming the first-ever Model United Nations (UN) Team for Escambia County and working with the local community to secure the funding necessary to have her students travel to Orlando to participate in Model UN. Mrs. Barry also serves as the coach for the Varsity and Junior Varsity cheerleading teams, produces the Miss Northview High School Pageant, and is a co-sponsor of the Student Government Association.

Thanks in large part to her success within her own school environment, Mrs. Barry has